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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REPORT NO. [REDACTED]

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CD NO. 446

COUNTRY Bulgaria

DATE DISTR. 9 Nov. 1951

SUBJECT The Bukhovo Uranium Mines

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PLACE
ACQUIRED [REDACTED]NO. OF ENCLS.
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REPORT NO.

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1. Engineers selected the area to be mined by means of a special instrument. Subsequently, holes 200 to 300 meters deep were drilled and enlarged to form the mine shafts. In approximately July 1949, following the completion of 29 shafts, the mines were put into operation.
2. In the Bukhovo area uranium ore is being mined in the following three districts:
 - a. Borchevo District : 22 pits;
 - b. Seslavtsi District : 29 pits; and
 - c. Kremikovtsi District : Unknown number of newly opened pits.
3. The mine shafts are dug to a depth of from 200 to 1,000 meters, and galleries 15 to 20 meters long are extended to the right and left. The mines work on three 8 hour shifts. The pits are narrow and can accommodate only four workers at one time. Two men extract the ore and two more load the ore on hand carts and dump it on stockpiles within the mine area.
4. Ore extracted from these pits resembles lignite coal except for its grey color and the fact that it is heavier than coal. Only that ore which contains white spots is of value, and the remainder is thrown away. By means of an instrument called a compass, Soviet engineers separate the ore into three categories. This instrument has a face and a hand like a clock, and is operated by a spring mechanism. The instrument is wound and left on a pile of raw ore. After making several revolutions, the hand indicates the percentage of uranium in the ore. Ore of the first category is indicated when the hand points to 13 or 14; of the second category when the hand registers 9 to 13; and of the third category when numbers below 9 are registered. Ore of the first and second categories is taken directly to the railroad station at Yana without being refined, and is packed in paper sacks tied with hemp and sealed with wax. The ore is then transported directly to the Soviet Union. Informant learned from a friend that third category ore is sent to the refinery in Bukhovo where the impurities are

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separated. The ore is crushed, placed in boilers, and a nitric acid solution poured over it.

5. A Trudovak battalion is employed in these mines, one company being assigned to each of the three sections. Each company numbers 250 to 300 workers. Each Trudovak working in the pits is required to extract four small hand carts of ore per eight hour shift. There are two sizes of hand carts. One holds $4/5$ of a cubic meter (1,500 to 1,700 pounds), and the other $1\ 2/5$ cubic meters (3,000 to 3,300 pounds). If he fails to attain his quota, he must continue working on the next shift and cannot have any food until he does attain his quota. In each pit, 12 men work an average of 14 hours. There is a total number of 600 to 700 men working in all the pits, and 2,500 to 2,600 small cart loads of ore are produced daily, i.e., approximately 2,000 tons of ore. Regularly, two trains, each having 35 to 40 freight cars loaded with ore, leave the Yana railroad station; the first train leaves at 1600 hours and the second at 0430.²
6. In the outskirts of Bukhovo, 3 kilometers from the Yana railroad station and 250 to 300 meters from the processing plant, there is a four-story concrete building in which approximately 400 Soviet men and women are quartered. All the engineers and officials working in the mines are Soviet nationals.
7. Security in the mine area is enforced by 120 uniformed Bulgarian Militiamen, commanded by a captain. Any stranger entering this area is arrested. Not even the residents of Bukhovo can approach. The entrance gate to the mine area is surveilled by Soviet guards. No one is allowed to enter this area without first obtaining a permit. Observation posts manned by Militia are located around the mine area, and anyone attempting to enter this area illegally is shot.

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1. [REDACTED] It is not clear whether this compass is used to grade ore which has already been extracted or whether it is used prior to the extraction, or both. Informant stated at another point that when the grade has been determined by the compass, approximately 9 holes are drilled to a depth of approximately one and one half meters at marked places, and dynamite is used to extract the ore.
2. [REDACTED] Possibly informant means that the trains depart daily.

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